United Nations E/C.19/2007/3/Add.7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 March 2007

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Sixth session
New York, 14-25 May 2007
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

United Nations Development Fund for Women

Summary

Since 1994, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been developing projects and programmes that respond to the need to make indigenous issues a priority in its agenda. Integrating indigenous women's rights is fundamental to UNIFEM, as it seeks to more fully develop and expand its existing projects while eliciting the cooperation and support of other United Nations agencies.

The UNIFEM programme focuses on advocacy for indigenous women's rights and the elimination of discrimination. UNIFEM has been working to mainstream gender and women's human rights issues into its diverse programmes, issues such as combating violence against women and including women in peace processes, while engaging indigenous groups, particularly women.

* E/C.19/2007/1.

07-25809 (E) 210307

I. Response to the recommendations addressed exclusively to the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Recommendation 47

1. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been introducing the perspective of indigenous women into its work on violence against women by means of existing internal processes and innovative initiatives addressing the issue in indigenous communities. For example, through the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women,[1] UNIFEM is supporting a partner non-governmental organization in combating violence against women in Mayan communities in Guatemala. The initiative will document the magnitude of the problem in four Quetzaltenango localities and will raise awareness of violence against women in those communities. It aims to increase knowledge on the human rights of women in their struggle against violence and to combat the phenomenon by empowering women and strengthening the Government's response to it. Within the framework of the Trust Fund, UNIFEM supports a project in Chiapas, Mexico, to combat gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in a multicultural context. The non-governmental organization will conduct a qualitative study to examine how young indigenous women perceive the phenomenon of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. It will also strengthen prevention strategies and initiatives and contribute to raising awareness and disseminating information about the connection between violence and HIV/AIDS.

2. The work of UNIFEM in raising awareness of violence against women in indigenous communities includes an initiative within the framework of the 16 days of activism to end violence against women, a global campaign in which UNIFEM is involving partner United Nations agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean. In partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNIFEM supported the training of 50 indigenous journalists, 52 per cent of whom were women, from community radio stations in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru on prevention of violence against women. Journalists from 17 radio stations participated in the first contest for radio programmes on the prevention of violence against Quichua and Quechua women by producing radio programmes on violence prevention in indigenous communities. The programmes were widely broadcast by local radio stations in indigenous communities.

3. UNIFEM also supported several non-governmental human rights organizations in the northern border area of Ecuador and in Peruvian Amazonia to work with women and men in indigenous communities to recognize violence against women as a problem and explore mechanisms to effectively address it. As a result, indigenous communities in both Ecuador and Peru have increased their awareness and have the capacity to address violence against women through both traditional and western justice systems. Non-governmental organizations are now better informed and trained to work on the issue. Owing to the innovative character of the initiative, UNIFEM decided to generate and disseminate knowledge on the work in partnership with non-governmental organizations on violence in indigenous communities and capacity-building in Ecuador and Peru.

[1] Established by General Assembly resolution 50/166 and managed by UNIFEM.

4. In order to promote knowledge sharing on violence against indigenous women, UNIFEM supported the translation and publication of a report by the International Indigenous Women's Forum entitled "Mairin Iwanka Raya: indigenous women stand against violence". The report, which serves as a companion to the study by the Secretary-General on violence against women, will be made widely available in the region, especially to indigenous women in Latin America.

5. The commitment of UNIFEM to combating violence against indigenous women includes collaboration with the non-governmental organization Red Ada in Bolivia in developing an advocacy strategy to ensure that laws and policies address the issue of feminicide. The strategy includes an in-depth study on the phenomenon in rural areas, a proposal to include it in the penal code, and workshops with members of the justice sector. The strategy is still under way and has to date contributed to raising awareness of the issue of decision makers and the general public through the collection and dissemination of information.

6. Initiatives to strengthen indigenous women's rights to combat violence include a project in the region of Sucumbíos in Ecuador, where UNIFEM and the United Nations Population Fund supported the Asociación de Mujeres de la Nacionalidad Kichwa in a project to sensitize and develop capacities on gender-based violence as one of the problems limiting women's participation and exercise of their rights at the community level. The project was implemented in Lago Agrio, Cascales and Putumayo, and used a strategy based on capacity-building workshops, awareness-raising and lobbying authorities of the Federación de Organizaciones Kichwa. Similarly, in Bolivia, the organization Gregoria Apaza, with the support of UNIFEM, is implementing a project in El Alto that aims to contribute to the attainment of the individual and collective rights of young indigenous women, as well as to orientate and train them on HIV/AIDS prevention and the reduction of gender-based violence.

II. Other significant information regarding recent policies, programmes, budgetary allocations or activities regarding indigenous issues

7. As part of its endeavour to strengthen indigenous women's organizations, in the Andean region UNIFEM supported a project carried out by the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas, a network of indigenous women's organizations. It included consultations in the five Andean countries with organizations of indigenous women to identify their priorities in the political sphere. The project culminated in a seminar held in Lima, which resulted in an agenda that prioritizes strengthening the political participation of indigenous women. The agenda was submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Andean Community.

8. In Mexico, UNIFEM has provided training and technical assistance to indigenous women's networks to advocate poverty reduction policies that take into account their perspective and demands. As a result of this support, a follow-up committee was established, with 40 representatives of indigenous women's networks, to prepare future meetings and develop an action plan. As part of that effort, UNIFEM supported the third meeting of indigenous women in Mexico City in August 2006, at which indigenous women developed a long-term action plan, and the principles of the work of the United Nations system with indigenous women

were ratified. The main result of the third meeting was a long-term plan for indigenous women and the Millennium Development Goals.

9. UNIFEM has been working with indigenous women to help introduce a gender and multi-ethnic perspective to public policies and poverty reduction plans. In Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Paraguay, UNIFEM is implementing a programme that aims at including gender equality, with a racial and ethnic perspective, in policies in order to reduce the inequality that persists in Latin America. A main component of the programme is the systematization of information and the development of knowledge on the issue. Studies have been concluded on poverty, race, ethnicity and gender in the region, as has an analysis of poverty reduction programmes in the four countries involved. As part of those efforts and with the aim of strengthening the representation of indigenous women's networks at the decision-making level, the UNIFEM office for Brazil and the Southern Cone supported the meeting of the regional networks of black and indigenous women in preparing the Regional Conference of the Americas on the progress made and challenges remaining with regard to the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, held in Brasilia from 26 to 28 July 2006.

10. The work of UNIFEM in the area of governance and peace and security includes several initiatives in partnership with indigenous women. For example, UNIFEM is supporting the post-conflict reconstruction process in Guatemala in the framework of the "Women, peace and security" project, whereby it is helping the Congreso Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas to develop a common agenda for indigenous women's organizations and to highlight the importance of including the rights of indigenous women in the peace process.

11. UNIFEM aims at involving indigenous women in decision-making processes, including participation in politics, a key factor in transforming their demands into governmental policies; therefore, it supports strengthening the capacity of indigenous women to advocate and participate in key areas. For example, in Bolivia, UNIFEM supports indigenous women's advocacy in the process of the consolidation of the Constitutional Assembly, by supporting indigenous women at the national level in presenting their demands and focusing on poverty issues, in order to include those demands in the new political constitution of the State. In addition, a UNIFEM lead project, financed by the United Nations Development Programme and the Canadian International Development Agency, that includes working with indigenous and mestizo women, will help to mainstream gender into the Constitutional Assembly through, inter alia, monitoring, advocacy, dissemination of information and capacity-building by exchanging best practices with Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

12. In Ecuador, UNIFEM has been working to strengthen the capacity of local women leaders to participate in political processes. As a result, in the Province of Tungurahua, a participatory project which included consultations and training of women leaders, including those from rural indigenous communities from the nine municipalities, led, inter alia, to the election, for the first time, of two women leaders — one indigenous and one mestizo — to the local government committee.

13. UNIFEM is involved in several inter-agency initiatives on indigenous issues; among others, it is part of the inter-agency group on indigenous issues in Mexico. In Ecuador, as a result of the participation of UNIFEM in the Thematic Group on

Indigenous Issues, the gender perspective was included in the discussion of its programming and activities with the indigenous and Afro-descendants communities.

14. In partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNIFEM supported a two-part workshop for approximately 30 indigenous women from Mexico and Central America, held in July and November 2006. The workshop strengthened the capacity of indigenous women to address environmental issues and to develop skills in community radio broadcasting. The broadcast material will be disseminated in the languages of the indigenous communities involved. As a result of the workshop, a workplan was developed to link the work in community radios with the work of indigenous and non-indigenous women at the national level.

15. Regarding the access of indigenous women to information, the third Know-How Conference entitled "Weaving the information society: a gender and multicultural perspective", was held in Mexico City at the recommendation of the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement in August 2006, with 350 participants from all over the world, including the network of Mexican documentation centres, invited by UNIFEM. The main objectives of the Conference were to promote women's libraries and networks and to develop specific policies for indigenous and rural access to information.